

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC FREEDOM IN ASIA GOAL OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

By Todd Bullock
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WASHINGTON, APRIL 11 -- The challenge for the United States in Asia is to pursue a policy that encourages political and economic freedom, says National Security Advisor Steve Hadley.

"We believe we are making progress in both East Asia and South Asia," Hadley said April 5 in a speech to the National Bureau of Asian Research's Strategic Asian Forum in Washington. He added that "increasingly we need to move away from thinking of these as two separate regions, but as part of an increasingly integrated Asian whole."

The U.S. regional strategy in East Asia is based on maintaining close ties with traditional allies and cooperating on regional and global challenges, according to Hadley.

He said the United States is working to improve civil-military relations in Japan and South Korea by "relocating our military forces out of some urban and other sensitive areas, while at the same time reconfiguring these forces to enhance their deterrent capability."

The United States also has strengthened ties with "key allies and friends" such as Mongolia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, he said.

U.S. policy in the Asia-Pacific also depends on welcoming China as a "responsible stakeholder" in the international system, according to Hadley.

He said the United States supports China's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and has encouraged China to influence North Korea to end its nuclear weapons program in accordance with a September 2005 agreement. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2005/Sep/19-210095.html>).)

The United States and China also are cooperating on energy needs, according to Hadley.

"We have included China in our efforts to expand our sources of secure and environmental responsible energies, such as clean coal technologies, nuclear power and hydrogen fuel cells," he said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2005/Apr/04-622583.html>).)

Hadley urged China to "change policies that exacerbate tensions in East Asia and the world," such as its attempts to lock up energy supplies as well as its nontransparent military expansion. In the economic arena, he called for greater market access for U.S. exports and better enforcement of intellectual property rights. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2006/Apr/04-929128.html>).)

The national security advisor also said political freedom must follow economic freedom.

"Chinese leaders need to see that they cannot let their population increasingly experience the freedom to buy, sell and produce, while denying them the right to assemble, speak and worship," he said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2006/Mar/10-934714.html>).)

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Turning to South Asia, Hadley said the U.S. strategy for the region begins with the premise that the United States can and must improve relations with both India and Pakistan simultaneously.

"Good U.S.-Indian relations are in the best interest of Pakistan, and good U.S.-Pakistan relations are in the best interest of India," he said.

Hadley said the United States is working to encourage Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to offer greater economic and political freedom to his people while integrating Pakistan into the international community. "We will work with President Musharraf to ensure that the 2007 elections are free and fair."

Pakistan's decision to dismantle A.Q. Khan's nuclear proliferation network and its support in the War on Terror has led to broader and deeper engagement with the United States that includes military and economic assistance, according to Hadley. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/Archive/2006/Mar/05-584654.html>).)

Under a multiyear assistance program, the United States has provided Pakistan more than \$250 million for education programs, vaccinations against polio for 98 percent of Pakistani

children under the age of 5 and more than 15,000 loans to small businesses outside major cities throughout Pakistan, he said. (See related fact sheet (<http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/Archive/2004/Mar/18-829041.html>).)

Turning to India, Hadley said the United States has a "strategic relationship" with that country.

"Our two nations agreed to work together in fighting terrorism, promoting democracy, expanding free and fair trade, improving human health and the environment, and meeting energy demands through new technologies," he said.

As an example, he cited a recent U.S.-India agreement on civil nuclear cooperation that would separate India's civilian and military facilities, placing two-thirds of existing facilities under international safeguards and promising to place all future civilian facilities under safeguards. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/Archive/2006/Mar/02-397694.html>).)

"Expanding civilian nuclear power can help India meet its growing energy needs without relying so heavily on fossil fuels, which would only increase competition for resources that are already in high demand," Hadley said.

Addressing the ongoing situation in Kashmir, Hadley said the United States would encourage Pakistan to end all support for Kashmiri militants and urge India to respond in good faith to Pakistani ideas on Kashmir.

"We will use our increasing influence in South Asia to prevent a nuclear arms race in that region," he said.

For additional information on U.S. policies, see East Asia and the Pacific (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eap>) and South and Central Asia (<http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/>).

The transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/04/20060405-11.html>) of Hadley's remarks is available on the White House Web site.

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